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State Office of Minority & Women Business Assistance

***Working to build the Commonwealth's
economic strength through the
development of minority and women
owned businesses***

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
COLLECTION

JAN 19 2001

University of Massachusetts
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Fiscal Year 1999 Annual Report

*Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Argeo Paul Cellucci, Governor*

*Carolyn E. Boviard, Director
Department of Economic Development*

Jo Anne M. Thompson, Executive Director

www.state.ma.us/somwba





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OUR MISSION

is to foster and support the development and growth of minority and women business enterprises (MBEs and WBEs) and minority and women controlled non-profit organizations (M/NPOs and W/NPOs). The State Office of Minority and Women Business Assistance (SOMWBA) does this by facilitating their participation in the mainstream of the state's economy through increased access for these developing companies to business and economic development opportunities.

To help accomplish this mission, these enterprises and organizations are certified and promoted by SOMWBA for the fullest utilization in contracting by federal, state, local government agencies, and the private business sector.

Agency services are offered in business certification, the enforcement of regulations, business assistance workshops, trade fairs, and seminars, and business advocacy. The certification services provide MBEs and WBEs access to affirmative procurement programs, often referred to as "sheltered-market programs". The enforcement efforts help to ensure that only bona fide business enterprises are and continue to be certified. Business assistance services provide a central resource and referral service to constituents. Advocacy efforts help to ensure that the needs and concerns of constituents are not only heard, but, more importantly, are promoted to provide equal access and opportunity for all.

OUR HISTORY

begins in 1972 with a grant from the US Department of Commerce, allowing the office to begin enrolling minority owned businesses for opportunities on federally funded public works contracts. The agency was officially established by state statute in 1978 with MGL C.23 A § 41 (9). The 1996 re-organization of state government placed SOMWBA as a division of the Department of Economic Development within the Governor's Executive Branch of state government.

The office is located in the State Transportation Building, Ten Park Plaza. It is relatively small in size, eleven state employees and twelve contract workers, but it is a powerhouse of dedicated personnel. The agency is comprised of three distinct units: Certification, Business Advocacy and Assistance, and Support Services & Management Information Systems.

SOMWBA provides centralized certification services that are utilized by the Commonwealth, and by Massachusetts' cities and towns, state authorities, and private enterprise. SOMWBA receives additional support and special funds from transportation agencies and authorities to meet the extra demand for certification services in federal-aid transportation procurement and construction projects in the state. These contracts

and projects require a state operated program for disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) certification.

SOMWBA publishes internet-based searchable directories of certified for-profit, nonprofit, Portuguese-owned, and disadvantaged businesses for use under the Commonwealth's affirmative procurement programs. These programs are mandated under Executive Order 390, and MGL C. 7, § 40 N. The office is also a Public Access Site for the Commonwealth Procurement Access and Solicitation System (CommPASS), allowing businesses free internet access to research available state contract opportunities.

This FY 1999 annual report covers the activities of the agency's units for the fiscal year, in the order that a client may typically encounter them. It also includes letters and correspondence from our business clients attesting to our services.

In October 1998, Executive Director France Lopez left the agency. SOMWBA's sixth Executive Director, Jo Anne M. Thompson was appointed in February 1999.

Community Summary

*Seraphin
&
Associates*



healthcare consultants

September 11, 1999

Letha Roberts
Certification Specialist
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Economic Development
State Office of Minority and Woman Business Assistance
10 Park Plaza, Rm 3740
Boston, MA 02116

Dear Letha:

Today I received notification that Seraphin and Associates is certified as a woman owned business. On behalf of all of us we wish to thank you for your patience, guidance and support throughout the certification process.

We hope that with our new certification we can really make our enterprise take off.

Very truly yours,

Jo Seraphin
President

RECEIVED

SEP 15 1999

*Jo Seraphin • 84 Dudley Road • Sudbury MA 01776
phone & fax 978-443-3101 • saconsults@aol.com*

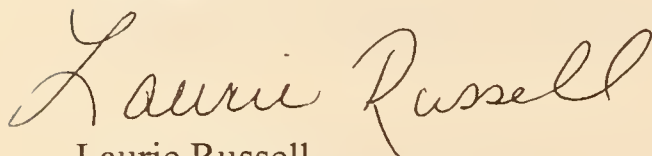
FANTASTIC TRANSCRIPTS
59 TEMPLE PLACE #660
BOSTON, MA 02111
617-451-1807
www.fantastictranscripts.com
e-mail: info@fantastictranscripts.com

MAY 26, 1999

Dear Ms. Thompson,

I wish to thank you and your office for a very information seminar. Mr. Tom Hall, the facilitator and presenter was excellent. He was not only thorough but was also engaging and interesting; not always the easiest of combinations to achieve. It is so easy to become engulfed in the bureaucratic barrage of paperwork that is necessary to become involved with government agencies. It is quite a nice touch for SOMWBA to offer such a workshop for our benefit. Again my thanks to you, your office, and especially to Mr. Hall. I look forward to attending the workshop on June 3, at UMASS Boston.

Sincerely,



Laurie Russell
Fantastic Transcripts

cc: Ms. Davida Craig
Mr. Tom Hall

RECEIVED

MAY 28 1999



Ms. Nedra D. White
SOMWBA
10 Park Plaza 3rd Fl
Boston, MA 02116

02/05/99

Ms. White

Thank you for take the time to explain the update process and for alerting us of the re-certification. Dealing with people like you make life a little easier.

Thank You



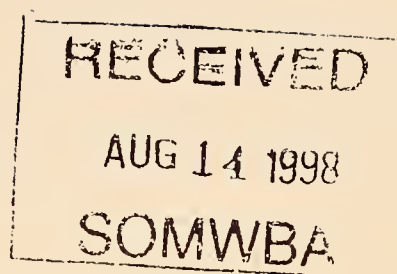
Jay Mattier
President

781-259-2800

P.O. Box 6207 • Lincoln, MA 01773 • Office: ~~(800) 863-8195~~ • Fax: (617) 259-2801

Conover & Company Communications, Inc.

Ms. France A. Lopez
Executive Director
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Economic Development
State Office of Minority and Women Business Assistance
100 Cambridge Street - Room #1303
Boston, MA 02202



C	E
C	E

Dear Ms. Lopez:

I am writing to sing the praises of a member of your staff, Ms. Nedra D. White. During our company's recent recertification effort, Ms. White was incredibly helpful in guiding me through the maze of required paperwork. Her calm and efficient manner made the whole exercise much easier to tackle.

At a time when many are quick to criticize, I wanted to take time to applaud Ms. White's commitment to customer service and express my gratitude for her patience and professional approach to her work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeanne S. Sklarz".

Jeanne S. Sklarz
President

8 Grove Street
Suite 300
Wellesley, MA 02181
Tel 781.237.7781
Fax 781.237.6755

**SOMWBA Support Services
And
Management Information Systems
(SSU/MIS)**

Executive Assistant

Brenda Ramos Perez

**Senior Director of Administration,
Systems Administrator**

David A. Villeneuve

Certification Specialist Assistant

Collin Reid

Certification Specialist Assistant, MIS

Marcus Bermudez

Receptionist

Carolyn Vick

MISSION

The mission of the SSU/MIS Unit is to provide seamless support for all of SOMWBA's vital day-to-day processes. The administrative support services staff works to serve the Minority and Woman Businesses seeking to increase the economic growth of Massachusetts. The support services staff of SOMWBA provides for its vital processes including the electronic and manual file support systems. From the reception of all visitors to the processing of the SOMWBA Directories of Certified Businesses, they act in the best interest of certified companies carrying the administrative needs of a regulatory state agency. This includes computer network administration, and agency systems that provide the continuity necessary for all of SOMWBA to meet the agency's mission for FY 1999.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Carolyn Vick, SOMWBA's Receptionist, is the first contact for an average of 600 new companies seeking economic opportunities with the Commonwealth when they request certification by SOMWBA, or information on business assistance programs.

Collin Reid, Certification Specialist Assistant, assisted 2500 constituents during the year by answering telephone status calls regarding a company's application process, handling various office correspondence, and scheduling appeal hearings for companies denied certification. His greatest contribution to the agency's mission is his efficiency in communicating with company's that have applied to SOMWBA for certification. Many constituents are very pleased to receive a prompt response to their inquiries regarding their company's status during the certification process. Behind the scenes he ensured the agency could run furiously with sufficient supplies to do the job.

Marcus Bermudez, Certification Specialist Assistant specializing in DBE Management Information Systems, provided invaluable work on the Commonwealth Procurement Access & Solicitation System (Comm-PASS). His greatest contribution to the agency's mission during FY 1999 included the redesign and upgrade of the SOMWBA Internet Web Site (www.state.ma.us/somwba) to utilize current technology. This work better enabled the user to intuitively navigate through the SOMWBA web pages, making it easier to retrieve information needed to assist in contracting with the Commonwealth or improve and grow their company. This redesign also expedited use of SOMWBA's on-line Directory of Certified Businesses, increasing access to the most up-to-date certified business listings. A user can now download a copy of the Directory of Certified Businesses to their own computer and find business linkages at any time. The design of SOMWBA's web page enhances finding information on bid proposals from Comm-PASS, business assistance resources, and information that describes SOMWBA's work at the touch of a "mouse". A print of the web page follows this section.

Brunilda Ramos-Perez, Executive Assistant to the Executive Director and Support Services Unit Supervisor, is the lifeblood of the agency. She was responsible for setting up the agency's procedures to enable any staff to take the place of another in the times of crisis that a state agency incurs on occasion. Mrs. Perez is directly responsible for the **SOMWBA Administrative Case Law Library**. This library continues to be a special SOMWBA development as an administrative case law library that contains copies of substantive administrative initial and final determinations by this office. The library is open to the public during regular business hours by appointment.

David Villeneuve, Director of SOMWBA Administration and System Administrator, assisted the agency in taking one step further into the electronic age with the advent of electronic directories of certified businesses made accessible to all on the Internet and through electronic mail. Also, as the agency fiscal director he kept the financial health of the agency intact, and managed its information support systems.

This is a screen print of the SOMWBA web site home page from FY 1999.

news

- ▶ **New! Download the SOMWBA MBE and WBE Directory. Click here for more information.**
- ▶ **SOMWBA certified? Create a hyperlink from the SOMWBA Directory by providing us with your company's email and web site addresses. Click here to send.**

Begin SOMWBA
Certification

Everything you need to
know to begin the
certification process.

[Register for a Workshop.](#)

The SOMWBA Directories

Search for Minority,
Women and
Disadvantaged
Businesses.

Key Business

Names & Places

A special introduction to
other Massachusetts
business sites and more.

A World of News

Bulletins, newsletters and
web sites for the business
owner.

Feedback

Send us your questions
and comments.



State Office of Minority and Women Business Assistance

Welcome to SOMWBA!

September 14

[Annual New England Minority Enterprise Development Celebration!](#)

The State Office of Minority and Women Business Assistance (SOMWBA) is an agency within the Massachusetts Department of Economic Development.

SOMWBA promotes the development of certified minority business enterprises (MBE), women owned (WBE) business enterprises, and minority non-profit (M/NPO) and women (W/NPO) non-profit organizations. It does this by facilitating their participation in Massachusetts business and economic development opportunities. Specifically, SOMWBA offers services in certification, enforcement, business assistance and advocacy.

What is Certification? Certification is a marketing tool, used specifically by certified businesses in the Commonwealth's Affirmative Market Program to enhance purchasing/contracting opportunities with state agencies that participate in the program. Where an agency has affirmative purchasing goals, certification increases a participant's chances of receiving a contract. Certification does not guarantee success each and every time a participant bids, but it may add a competitive edge to a bid. SOMWBA actively promotes the participation of certified businesses in public and private purchasing and contracting programs.

[Job Opportunities at SOMWBA](#)

Did you know..

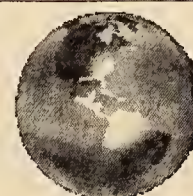
The total of all minority owned businesses in 1992 was 1,965,565, a 61.9% change over the previous count in 1987.

Home **SOMWBA
Certification**

The
**SOMWBA
Directory**



Key Business
Names and
Places



Feedback

Home [Begin Certification](#)

[Access Certified
Businesses](#)

[Bid on State
Contracts](#)

[Business Names &
Places](#)

[A World of News](#)

[Questions?
Comments?](#)

Business Assistance and Advocacy Unit (BAA)

Senior Director

David K. Craig

Assistant to Director

Thomas C. Hall

MISSION

The mission of the Business Assistance and Advocacy Unit (BAA) is to inform individuals and businesses about public resources to assist small business, and instruct business owners on how to access affirmative purchasing opportunities using SOMWBA certification. BAA accomplishes its mission by regularly holding free workshops in certification and purchasing across the state, by speaking wherever possible to business groups and other organizations about affirmative market opportunities, and hosting or exhibiting at business expositions and fairs.

BAA is the outreach unit of SOMWBA. It works to publicize SOMWBA as an available and helpful business resource, to publicize the existence of the Commonwealth's affirmative market programs, and to attract businesses to the program. The unit also refers businesses to other assistance agencies whenever needed. BAA is often the first contact a business may have with SOMWBA and state affirmative market programs.

WORKSHOPS

BAA holds workshops every month in Boston, and bi-monthly in Springfield, Worcester, Lawrence, Lowell and Framingham; and rotates a workshop in the Southeastern Mass/Cape area between New Bedford, Fall River, and Barnstable. The workshops explain the state's affirmative purchasing programs, highlight public contract opportunities and how to access them, and walk participants throughout the requirements for certification, the application, and documentation. BAA also holds special workshops by request, for business groups.

The BAA conducted 46 workshops statewide during FY '99, down from last year's 62. We temporarily lost a Southeastern Mass host. Due to internal personnel changes the unit had a trainer in training (Thomas Hall) for eight months, thereby operating with only one trainer. A few workshops were cancelled due to low enrollment; perhaps something to be expected in good economic times. Yet, 917 persons attended a workshop; a five percent (5%) increase. Highlights include:

- Co-sponsored workshops with Center for Women and Enterprise, and Twin Cities Development Corporation.
- Made Lowell a permanent workshop location, using the offices of the Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD)

We also provided telephone workshops to 47 out-of-state businesses, and minority or woman controlled nonprofit organizations. Ninety-five percent (95%) of workshop survey respondents rate the workshop as at least "good", with 56% giving it an "excellent" rating. Ninety-two percent (92%) feel that the workshop should be required for certification.

The SOMWBA web site also benefits clients who want to register for the workshop. During FY '99, a total of 538 persons registered for a workshop via the Internet.

Business Assistance provided technical assistance to more than 300 individuals seeking business information during the fiscal year. The different types of information requested included business referrals, one-on-one technical assistance, agency MBE coordinator and contract assistance, and program development assistance to cities and towns. Over 100 information requests were made via SOMWBA's web site.

SOMWBA continues to refine its processes to better assist and accommodate the disabled. The workshop is adaptable to the needs of eligible disabled entrepreneurs. Staff is sensitive to ADA issues and strives to make information and resources accessible to all.

BAA planned and co-sponsored a seminar "How To Do Business With The State", for small, minority and women businesses. The three-hour seminar was co-sponsored by the Massachusetts Operational Services Division and the Minority Business Development Center, University of Massachusetts Boston. This was a repeat of the popular seminar series held last year. Two seminars were held in Holyoke and Boston in 1999, and were attended by over 100 businesses.

OUTREACH

SOMWBA's business assistance staff participated in many business and marketing forums, conferences, and task forces that deal with critical minority business community concerns. These included the Metcalf and Eddy S/M/W/DBE Business Fair, the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency's Trade Fair, the Operational Services Division's (OSD) first annual Statewide Training and Resource (STAR) Exposition, Roy F. Westin S/M/WBE Opportunities Seminar, the Center for Women and Enterprise's (CWE) Turbo Day Conference, New England Minority Purchasing Council's (NEMPC) Business Fair, EOTC Contractor's Briefing, South Shore Women's Business Network's (SSWBN) Networking Breakfast, and the Commonwealth Conference on International Business.

Also, SOMWBA staff were interviewed on "Straight Talk", a radio show targeted to women, hosted by Nan Sabel on 1290AM. We look forward to increased media interviews.

SOMWBA will continue to promote economic development opportunities for minority and women business owners in partnership with state agencies, chambers of commerce and business organizations. In particular, we want to partner with neighborhoods to bring our services to the communities where the businesses are located. We are reaching out and forging partnerships with legislators (for example, Rep. Swan, Rep. Cabral, Rep. Rodrigues) to better understand the issues facing their constituent entrepreneurs.

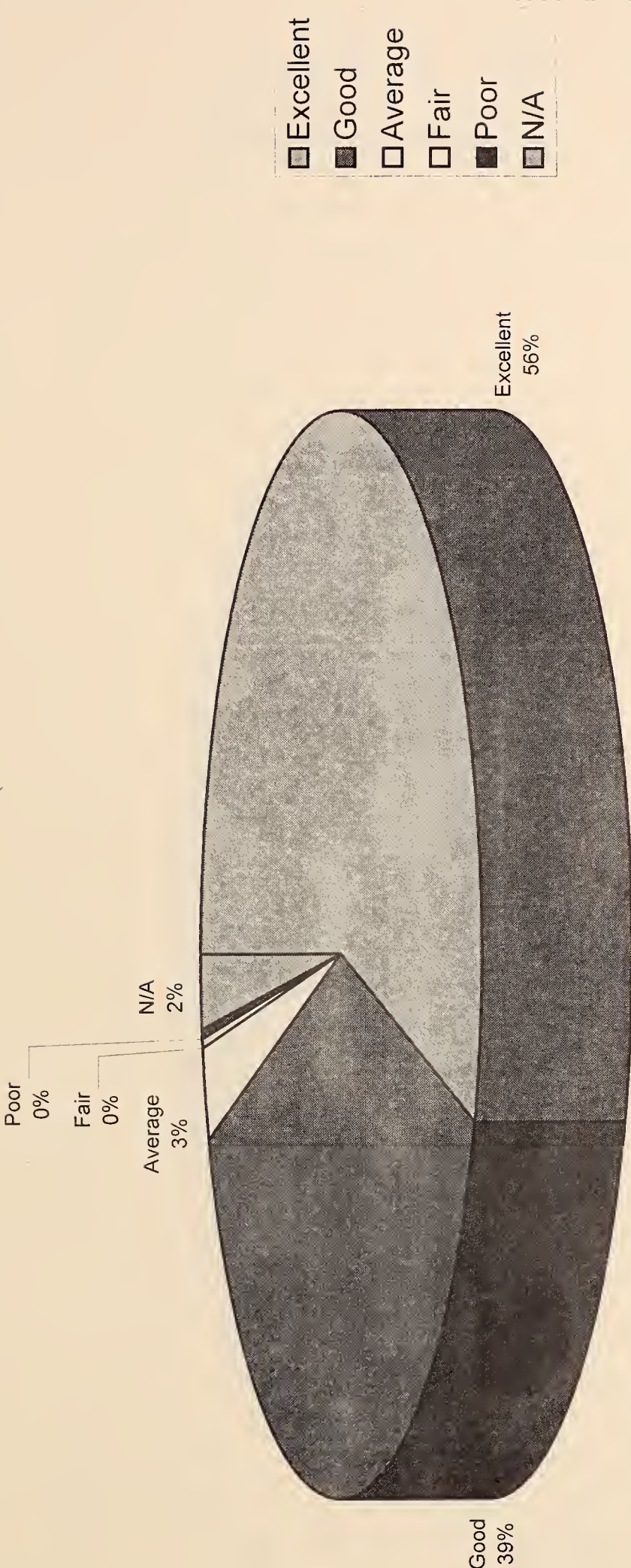
SOMWBA teamed with the Massachusetts Office of International Trade and Investment (MOITI) to sponsor a trade seminar, "Nigeria: A Diamond in the Rough", to encourage minority and women businesses to consider opportunities in international trade.

SOMWBA partnered with MOBD, the Massachusetts Alliance for Small Contractors (MassAlliance), BankBoston, the Boston Empowerment Center and the New England Minority Purchasing Council (NEMPC) to sponsor a Y2K readiness seminar for businesses. Over 150 businesses attended, and received Y2K software kits.

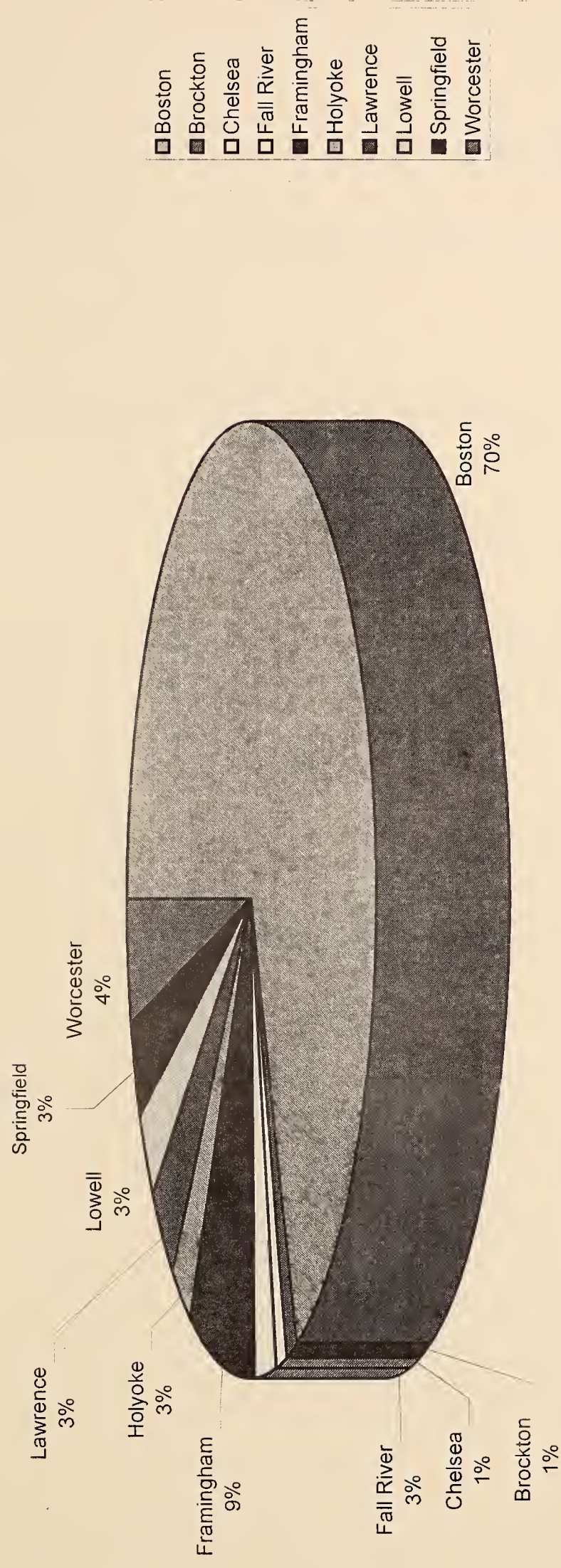
SOMWBA continues to advocate the benefits of certification for minority and women businesses. We are working with OSD, DMH and other state agencies to promote utilization of SOMWBA certified businesses in purchasing. We are also increasing our outreach to encourage more businesses to take advantage of certification to meet the procurement needs of agencies, thereby helping the agencies to meet their EO390 benchmarks.

We worked with the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority (MCCA) to assist prime design contractors in locating appropriate certified businesses for subcontracting opportunities on the new South Boston Convention Center; and to expedite the certification of minority and women design businesses who wanted to participate. Rafael Vinoly Architects (MBE) applied and via the SOMWBA fast-track certification process was certified in time to win a contract.

OVERALL RATING OF
PRE-CERTIFICATION WORKSHOPS FY'99



TOTAL NUMBER OF PRE-CERTIFICATION WORKSHOP ATTENDEES BY LOCATION FY '99



Certification Unit

**Senior Director of Certification,
General Counsel**

Julie A. M. Ahern

Acting Unified Certification Program Manager

James A. Henderson

Certification Unit Manager

Arthur R. Atkins

Certification Specialists

Letha Roberts

Karen Horton

Sandra Smith

Deborah Cooper

Patricia Killian

Certification Specialist Assistant

Nedra White

MISSION

The mission of the Certification Unit is to process in a timely and efficient manner all certification applications, ensuring that applicant businesses meet and, over the duration of their certification, continue to meet the requirements for participation in the commonwealth's affirmative market programs. These programs are Executive Order 390, MGL C. 7 § 40 N, and, on behalf of the US DOT/Massachusetts Highway Department, the Massachusetts DBE program.

The Unit's goals for FY 1999 were:

1. To increase actual number of cases and decision letters (substantive letters to an applicant detailing why a company may have failed to meet certification requirements) produced by all certification specialists to an average of 10 per month. The Unit succeeded in increasing the average number of cases and letters per person per month to 8.72 in FY 1999. This was up from 8.18 in FY 1998. Staffing changes in FY 1999, described below, continued to make the achievement of this goal difficult.
2. To improve internal standards and procedures for processing applications and tracking unit productivity. These efforts included making all paperwork and statistical reports better and easier to understand. Highlights of our efforts include:
 - Revision of SOMWBA's regulations effective 9/18/98 in order to improve clarity overall and specifically with respect to credential and residency requirements,
 - Continued revision of SOMWBA's Application Form, Short Form Application and Non-Profit Application,
 - Began development of a new Application Intake Procedure,
 - Developed new procedures for Certification Specialist Reports: 20 Day Denials/Show Cause and Category Expansions Denials and Withdrawals,
 - Developed a New Substantive Review Letter Procedure.

PRODUCTIVITY

During FY 1999, the Certification Unit received 936 cases and completed 614. This is down from fiscal year 1998 when 729 cases were received and 798 were completed.

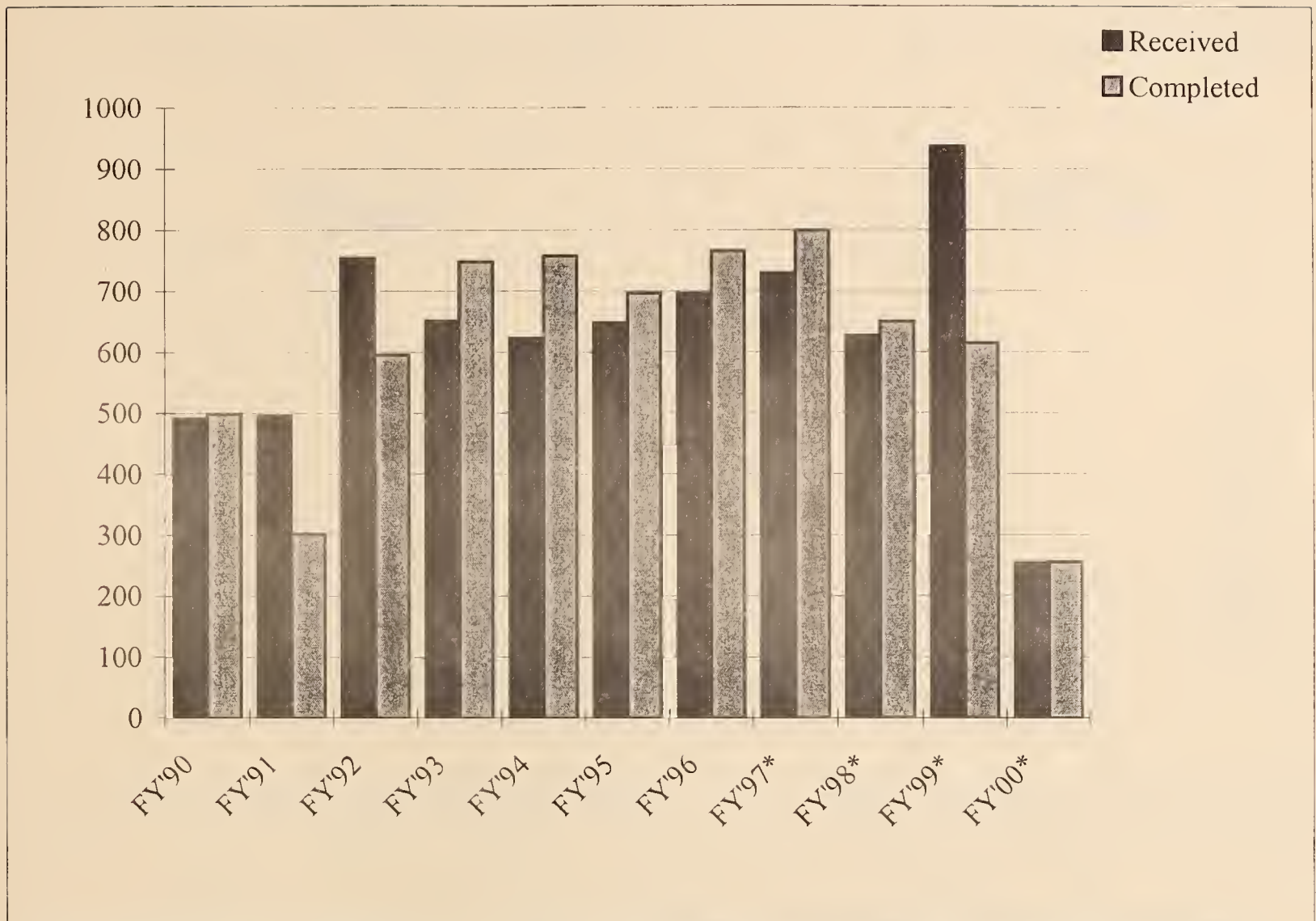
The reduction in overall productivity can be attributed to the fact that the Certification Unit continues to experience high staff turnover, and as a result has been working with a greatly reduced staff for much of FY 1999. SOMWBA has nine certification specialist positions. In FY 1999, the unit lost three certification specialists. Yet the per person case productivity of the Certification Unit increased during the year. In FY 1998, the average number of cases produced per month per specialist was 7.11; in FY 1999, 7.16.

The number of cases received includes companies undergoing substantive review. The substantive review process gives SOMWBA an opportunity to revisit companies that were certified more than six years ago. During this process, SOMWBA takes a second look at each company and determines whether the company remains certifiable. During the site visit with these companies, the certification specialist has an opportunity to advise the company of the new services that are available to them through the Comm-PASS program, the SOMWBA web site and elsewhere.

We produced more six year substantive review cases this year than last year. In FY 1998, 97 substantive reviews were conducted. In FY 1999, 150 substantive reviews were conducted.

Although these substantive reviews are beneficial to the certified companies and the program overall, these reviews often take longer to perform than new certifications; again leading to a net decrease in production. This is because the older files are often incomplete and out of order. Additionally, SOMWBA has made a policy decision that it is in the best interest of the program to ensure that we give these businesses every chance to provide additional information in order to complete their file and maintain their certification. This often involves waiting up to 90 days in order to secure the necessary information.

SOMWBA APPLICATION CHART FISCAL YEAR 2000

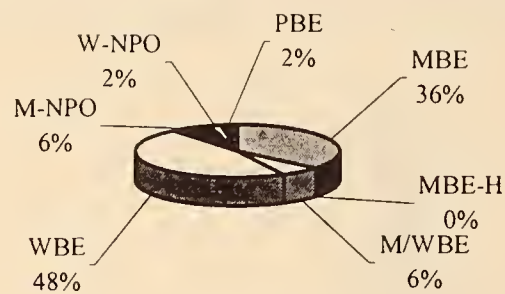


* Including cases that are assigned for recertification, administrative review, category expansion, enforcement, and decertification.

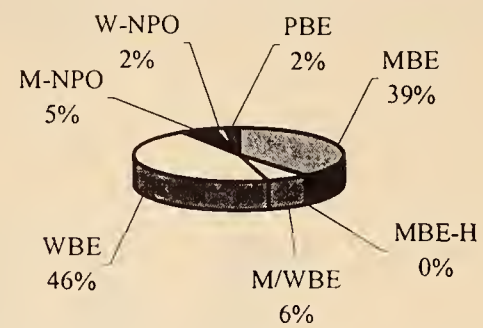
SOMWBA APPLICATION BAR GRAPH

This chart shows the number of applications received and completed by SOMWBA in each fiscal year. For example, in FY'91 SOMWBA received 495 applications but was able to process only 301, leaving a backlog of 194 applications not completed in FY'91.

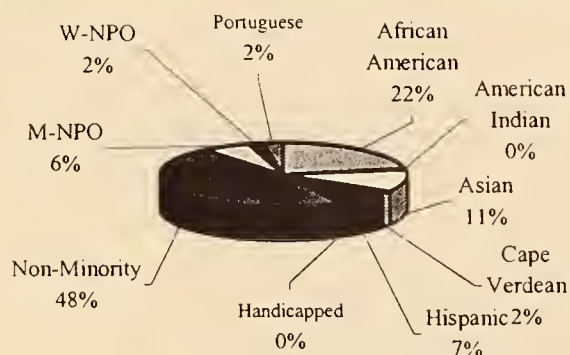
	Received	Completed	Zero Applications = Break Even	FY Opening Application Case Load
FY'90	490	498	8	120
FY'91	495	301	-194	314
FY'92	753	595	-158	472
FY'93	651	748	97	375
FY'94	622	757	135	240
FY'95	647	696	49	191
FY'96	696	765	69	122
FY'97*	729	798	69	53
FY'98*	626	649	23	30
FY'99*	936	614	-322	352
FY'00*	253	255	2	350
			Current Applications	136

Certified Companies by Type (MA)


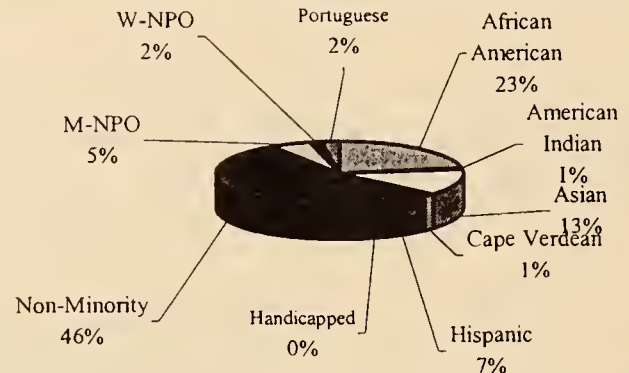
MBE	676
MBE-H	1
M/WBE	120
WBE	880
M-NPO	116
W-NPO	40
PBE	45
TOTAL	1878

Certified Companies by Type (Overall)


MBE	885
MBE-H	1
M/WBE	147
WBE	1031
M-NPO	116
W-NPO	40
PBE	49
TOTAL	2269

Certified Companies by Ethnicity (MA)


African American	413
American Indian	8
Asian	212
Cape Verdean	31
Hispanic	132
Handicapped	1
Non-Minority	880
M-NPO	116
W-NPO	40
Portuguese	45
Total	1878

Certified Companies by Ethnicity (Overall)


African American	505
American Indian	17
Asian	306
Cape Verdean	34
Hispanic	170
Handicapped	1
Non-Minority	1031
M-NPO	116
W-NPO	40
Portuguese	49
Total	2269

